

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

SOL Inc.

Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Sol, Inc. Reduces Leadtime and Increases Productivity Through Lean Implementation

Client Profile:

Sol, Inc., formerly known as Solar Outdoor Lighting, Inc., is a privately held, manufacturer of commercial grade Solar powered lighting products and systems used to light parking lots, streets, billboards, transit shelters and other areas needing security and safety. The company employs 22 people at its facility in Palm City, Florida.

Situation:

Sol was experiencing a growth of 30 percent and started to see a trend toward more product standardization versus the pervasive custom product in years past. Opportunities to continuously improve Sol were essential to support and maintain the competitive growth demands from their existing and expanding customer base. With many improvement opportunities for leadtime reduction and productivity improvement that could best be met by Lean manufacturing concepts, Sol decided to contact the Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Florida MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for help.

Solution:

Sol manufactures the Solar lighting system in cells, each of which is dedicated to specific components of the system. The cell speeds and schedules were not coordinated, which led to mismatched output product and late deliveries, as well as a high level of staged partial systems awaiting shipment. The bottleneck cells were Solar Panel production and Transit Shelter Security Light production. Florida MEP worked with Sol to improve and add features of point of use storage, workplace organization, detailed work instructions, and quality at the source. These features were integrated with a Kanban process for feeding material to the line. Florida MEP also worked with Sol to establish a system of standardized work instructions to assure repeatability in the manufacture of all products.

Results:

- * Reduced lead time by 50 percent.
- * Improved on-time delivery by 95 percent.
- * Created 3 new jobs.
- * Retained 2 jobs.
- * Increased customer satisfaction.

Testimonial:

"Florida MEP specialists are truly professional and very knowledgeable in Lean manufacturing practices as well as possessing the skills needed to be effective with employees at all levels."

Keith Bloomer, Plant Manager

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